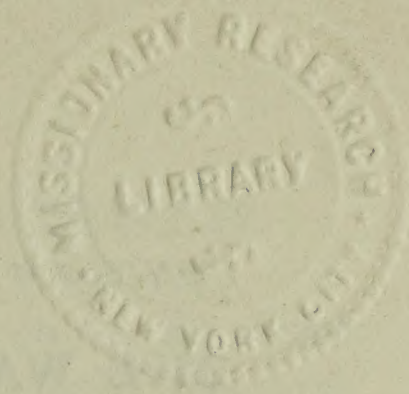


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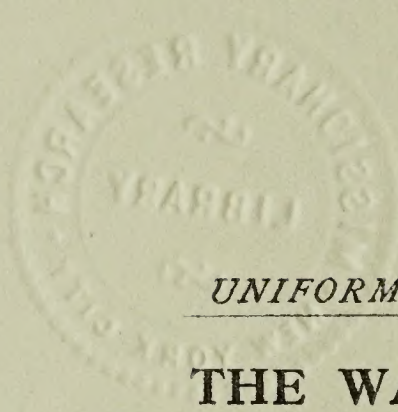


# THE LAYMAN ABROAD

BY

JOHN HOPE SIMPSON, Esq.

LATE OF THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE



*UNIFORM WITH THIS PAMPHLET*

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## THE WAR AND MISSIONS

BY THE

REV. N. S. TALBOT  
Assistant Chaplain-General

## AFTER THE WAR AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SOLDIERS

BY THE

REV. E. S. WOODS, C.F.  
Royal Military College, Sandhurst

## WHO IS WANTED?

To those considering Missionary Service

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM PATON



## THE LAYMAN ABROAD

“SUPPOSING a man wants to work for the cause of Christianity in the East or in Africa, but does not feel that he is fitted to be, or that it is his duty to be, a foreign missionary, what can he do?” Many men are asking this question. They would like to go abroad when the war is over; they would like to do something in the service of Christ and for the good of mankind, but they do not feel that the life of the professional missionary is for them. The object of this paper is to show such men what Christian opportunities they will find in pursuing a secular calling abroad.

From the definitely Christian position, the layman abroad has sundry advantages over the professional agent of a Church. The right thing in the conventional sense, is always expected of the Padre. It is not always expected of the layman, and the influence of the layman who habitually does the right thing is consequently of special value. At the same time the environment of the layman makes a consistent Christian life a matter of considerable difficulty, and a departure from the home standard is common, and frequently treated as venial. This does not apply to the Padre.

For purpose of classification the duties of the



layman abroad may be considered as they affect (i) himself, (ii) his fellow-exile, and (iii) the people of the country in which he is living.

(i) The first essential duty of every man whose work takes him abroad is to maintain himself at a high standard of physical efficiency. This is a truism, on which, however, experience shows the necessity to insist. No man can hope for a useful life, or a successful career from any point of view, who takes unnecessary risks in regard to his health. There are any number of textbooks on health in the tropics, many of them useful. Good working rules are: Go to bed early and get up early. Live a busy life, filling all the hours of the working day. Take plenty of exercise. Always change damp clothes as soon as possible. Be regular in your habits. Avoid alcohol except under medical advice. Do not trifle with ailments that seem trifling but get medical advice as soon as possible. Fever is the commonest ailment, and, in the absence of a physician, it will be found that a dose of calomel (3 to 5 grains) is an excellent start for treatment.

Incidentally, the first two of these rules may settle certain somewhat knotty problems—as for instance that of dancing. This has always seemed to me a harmless amusement if reasonably enjoyed. There is, however, a contrary view, very strongly held by many people, and a full and busy



life, with early hours, prevents indulgence which might prove harmful. Similarly with alcohol. Taken in moderation it is probably harmless. But the temptations attendant on its regular use are real and to many men great. Its use is unnecessary, its abuse is fatal. Common sense would therefore indicate its avoidance.

I have mentioned these two forms of self-indulgence as being those as to which opinions may commonly differ. They are, however, also questions affecting duty to the people of the country. In India (as in China), dancing on the European method is liable to lead to most serious misunderstanding among the inhabitants of the country, while to one great class, the Mohamadan, alcohol is anathema. The influence of the layman who avoids these two has consequently special weight among Indians.

The duties which a layman owes to his body, to keep it efficient in all its functions, are only less important than those which he owes to his moral and spiritual nature. The hostile influences are in both cases subtle, constant, and powerful. In the latter case, however, they are avoidable, and it cannot be too forcibly impressed on the man leaving England for the East, that it is the start that counts most. With a good start it is infinitely more easy to continue well, than it is to make up lee-way when the start has been a



bad one. Therefore take your stand at once, and let it be a definite one. If the station to which the new arrival is posted is a large one the matter will probably be comparatively simple. There will be a Y.M.C.A., or a Church, or a Mission Station, or a Padre, and on arrival the new-comer has only to search these out, and identify himself with their interests at once. I say "search these out" with intention, for, in India, at all events in my experience, the missionary element is extraordinarily retiring, and (probably for excellent reasons) does not include a search for newly-arrived laymen in its activities. Once he has established a connection with definitely Christian organizations such as those instanced, opportunities for development of the higher side of his nature offer themselves as of course, and the environment tends to promote spiritual growth.

The position of a new arrival from home in a station without these advantages is exceedingly difficult. Some few brave souls doubtless welcome a solitary struggle, but for the ordinary man a touch of human sympathy is very helpful, and this is a fact which should be remembered by the layman abroad if he ever happens to be joined by a new arrival in a lonely station. The man who, determined to live a Christian life, is posted to a place without local advantages must make his own opportunities of development, and



many a man has done it before him. Books are cheap and good, and a lonely station will give a man time for reading. It also provides an excellent chance for obtaining intimate knowledge of the language, religion, manners and customs of the inhabitants of the country—a chance which may never recur, and of which full advantage should be taken. It also probably permits of study of some branch of natural science—botany, entomology, ornithology—any one of which offers openings for useful work. Finally, private devotions should form a regular and indispensable part of the daily life. Whether in a large station with the help of congenial associates, or in a lonely station with no one like-minded, these are an essential condition of healthy spiritual life, abroad as at home.

(ii) The duties of the sojourner in a far country to his fellow-exile are seldom sufficiently realized. One of the many excellencies of the Y.M.C.A. is its provision for the British layman abroad. It is peculiarly and dangerously easy for the Christian man to focus his special activity on the specifically Christian agency and the non-Christian population, and to overlook the very urgent necessities of the man of his own race.

The first and most necessary duty is to remember that there is good in every man, and that the discovery of that good is worth some effort. True Christian loving-kindness is found in the



most unexpected places, and is exhibited by men who would scorn the name of Christian. Our layman abroad will fail in one of the most valuable of his functions if, by cutting himself away from those of his fellow-countrymen who are not nominally or obviously Christian, he fails to afford them the help, which a little care, or a little trouble, or even a little self-control would provide.

Remembering that your fellow-Britisher is also an exile from the special joys and privileges attaching to residence at home, it is a clear duty to provide or enhance any innocent enjoyment that may be possible. The wise layman abroad will, therefore, make himself as efficient as possible in the harmless manly sports which the Britisher affects. His reputation among his fellows, and, incidentally, among the inhabitants of the country, will be enormously enhanced thereby. In India a keen pigsticker, a good shot, a fine polo-player gains influence from the mere fact of his prowess, and acquires at the same time health and many other practical advantages. This fact has been realized by the Y.M.C.A., which makes a great point of providing physical recreation in connection with all its Indian branches, and doubtless with its branches in other countries.

The layman of the right sort will find many opportunities of helping Britishers who are in trouble, and he will not fail to seize them. In this



he will not be singular, for help in time of trouble is a practical principle of life in Eastern lands. One word of advice may be ventured on this point. *Never back a bill for a man in financial need.* Give him anything you can and will, but never pledge your credit with your banker for an amount which you may be called upon to pay, under circumstances which it is impossible to foresee, and which may prove more than inconvenient.

(iii) The most important of the duties of the Christian abroad, however, is undoubtedly to the people of the country in which his lot is cast, and the first essential duty consists in seeing the best in them. If eyes are only open to what is mean, contemptible, or merely objectionable, there is plenty to observe, to record and to remember, but there is a certainty that the impression gained will be unwholesome and at the same time inaccurate. Even in Christian lands this statement holds good. Nothing is so fatal to influence among the inhabitants of an eastern country, as contempt for their race and colour, for their habits and manners, and for their religions; and any man who desires their good, and to that end requires the confidence and affection of the people, must approach them with a keen sense of the essential brotherhood of humanity, and with an abiding intention to discover the best in the inhabitants of the country.



There is much that is strange, and not a little that is repellent in native habits and customs. But behind and beneath such superficial manifestations there is an infinity of good qualities, and, in India, an extraordinary wealth of affection and of gratitude for small services and attentions. These will not be apparent, unless the Indian is approached in the right spirit. On the assumption that the new arrival is determined to show that spirit in his relation to the people of the country, one piece of advice may be given with confidence. *Learn the people for yourself.* Do not accept as gospel opinions formed by residents, however long their standing. Do not believe all the tales you hear, for the majority of those to the detriment of "the natives" will probably not bear critical examination. Specially is this the case where "Native Christians" are concerned. They are said to be thieves, to be liars, to be immoral, to have accepted Christianity for what it brings in material advancement. These statements are made very commonly but practically invariably by people who have taken no trouble to know the Native Christian, and who are not in sympathy with missionary effort. It is, of course, true that there are Native Christians (so called) to whom all these accusations apply. The same is the case among professing Christians in other countries. But, as indeed is to be ex-



pected, in fact the true Native Christian compares in every respect favourably with his non-Christian fellow-countrymen.

It would be interesting, but would occupy too much space, to analyze the reason for the charges and allegations commonly made against the Native Christian. His unpopularity is probably in large measure due to two facts. Of these the first is that he is naturally more critical of the moral and spiritual behaviour of the European resident than is his non-Christian fellow-countryman. The second, that he demands more consideration in virtue of his newly-acquired self-respect, and refuses to accept the description of treatment which some Europeans mete out to all "natives" indiscriminately.

It is an excellent thing to employ, as far as possible, Christian servants of a respectable stamp, and to treat them as respectable and self-respecting human beings. The principle is not free from difficulty, for, with a mixed team, the non-Christian servants will frequently combine either to compel the Christians to resign the service, or to induce the master to part with them. Also, Christian servants demand and require more consideration than non-Christian. They demand, for instance, leave on Sundays to attend their church. They also live in better style than the non-Christians, and educate their families on a higher standard, thus probably demanding higher wages. But even



with these difficulties and inconveniences it is of great advantage, both to the master and to the Native Christian community, that Native Christian servants should be employed by Christian men.

An obvious duty is to support the Mission Church. Occasional attendance at services conducted in the vernacular is an excellent thing for the European, in improving his knowledge both of the language and of the people, and it is much appreciated by the Christian community. If the European layman is able to assist by taking some part in the service, the appreciation of the congregation is even greater.

The duty of the European to the Native Christian is very frequently overlooked though it is very obvious. His duty to the non-Christian is, however, equally urgent, but much more difficult. Living a consistent, pure, and manly life has, of itself, great influence, and the value of a godly life cannot be overestimated. The influence thus exerted can, however, be greatly enhanced by more active methods.

Public preaching is probably best left to the Padre ; to officials in Government service this form of propaganda is naturally not allowed, and even in the case of the non-official resident its value is doubtful. The Government servant is not precluded from taking classes among the Native Christians, a form of activity which is of



immense value, and which is uncommon. Non-officials might well take classes of non-Christian young men. There is keen interest in religion and in philosophy among non-Christian Indian students, and they are frequently eager to study the Bible as a portion of a liberal education. A class among students of this type, taken by a Christian layman, has infinite possibilities.

Daily household devotions, attended by the Christian servants and such of the non-Christians as wish to join (probably the majority will do so), are of value to the whole household; the only difficulty lies in the start. Once begun, they become a matter of daily routine.

The chief duty is, however, to maintain the Christlike spirit in daily relations with all men, steadily to refuse to treat the "native" as a person on a different and lower plane of humanity, never to fail in courtesy and consideration. In one sense this will make relations more difficult, for, as elsewhere, men will be found who are ready to take advantage of kindness. This disadvantage is utterly outweighed by the devotion which considerate treatment calls forth. The gratitude of the Oriental for even slight instances of consideration is a very remarkable and precious thing, and apart from any question of duty and of right conduct, the European resident in the East reaps a rich reward from a friendly attitude



to the people of the country. Friendship on the part of a Government official is apt to be a difficult matter, as official relations may arise at any moment, and are liable to be complicated. It is very soon realized, however, that friendship does not imply official favour. In the case of the non-official there is no such difficulty, and close and lasting friendship gives great opportunities for influence.

It must not be concluded that useful work can be done without effort. Yet the possible result justifies the effort. At the start there is the grind of learning the vernacular thoroughly. Comparatively few Europeans can speak correctly, very few can read and write. Yet these are preliminary necessities to effective relations, and facility should be acquired at all costs. The Oriental has little sense of the value of time. This is frequently a trial to the European, and one of the first things to learn is to suppress indications of impatience. The uneducated resident of the country is much like a child, and is easily repelled. Patience is therefore an essential, and the cultivation of a great mind. If the layman goes abroad determined to understand and prepared to love the people of the country, his influence and the value of his life cannot be overestimated. It will be a life of constant self-sacrifice, a condition of any life which aims at following that of the Master.



This Pamphlet, together with others in the same series, is issued at the instance of a small Committee which represents the leading Missionary Societies and the Y.M.C.A. The desire of this Committee is to suggest the importance of Foreign Missions, and the possibility of missionary service, to men now serving with the colours. It is hoped that any man who wishes to have further information about missionary work, or who would like to know how he may best help the cause of missions, either by personal service or in other ways, will apply to his Chaplain. Information can also be gained from Workers in the Y.M.C.A. Huts, and the Secretary of any Missionary Society will be glad to answer questions. The Joint-Committee mentioned above will deal with any questions which may be sent to it, through its Chairman, the Rev. W. PATON, 45 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1



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